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AUTHOR Moody, Lamar; Amos, Neil G.
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ABSTRACT

The aim of this study was to determine the perceptions of school superintendents in Mississippi toward the role of principals as members of the management team. The Team Management Opinionaire (TMO), a 12-item instrument designed by the researchers for the project, was sent to the 152 school superintendents in the state. Usable returns were received from 70 percent of the superintendents. The mean scores on each item and the total score of the TMO were compared by type of school district and related to district enrollment, degree level of the superintendent, age of the superintendent, and number of professional administrative and supervisory personnel in the district central office. Analysis of variance and multiple regression analysis were used in the statistical analyses. The school superintendents as a group are in agreement with the role of the principal in team management. The respondents indicated moderate to strong agreement on nine of the twelve items on the instrument. Slight agreement was indicated on the items that stated that principals should be represented on the districtwide collective bargaining management teams, and that principals should review and provide input concerning development of the school district budget. The group manifested slight disagreement with the proposition that principals should be represented on screening teams for screening applicants for districtwide administrative positions. (Author/MLF)

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PERCEPTIONS OF SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENTS TOWARD THE ROLE OF PRINCIPALS AS MEMBERS OF THE MANAGEMENT TEAM

By
Lamar Moody
Head of the Department of Educational Administration
and Community College Education
Mississippi State University

and

Neil G. Amos
Head of the Department of Elementary, Secondary,
and Special Education
Mississippi State University

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Bureau of Educational Research
Mississippi State University
Mississippi State, Mississippi 39762

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PERCEPTIONS OF SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENTS TOWARD THE ROLE OF PRINCIPALS AS MEMBERS OF THE MANAGEMENT TEAM

Statement of the Problem

The problem in this study was (1) to determine the perceptions of school superintendents in Mississippi toward the role of principals as members of the management team as measured by the Team Management Opinionaire (TMO), (2) to compare the mean scores on each item and the total score of the TMO by type of school district, and (3) to relate the scores on each item and the total score of the TMO to the variables of district enrollment, degree level of the superintendent, age of the superintendent, and number of professional administrative and supervisory personnel in the district central office.

Questions to be Answered

As a means of structuring the problem, answers to the following questions were sought:

1. Were there significant differences among the four types of school districts represented by the participants and the mean score on each item and the total score on the TMO?
2. Were there significant relationships between the variables of district enrollment, degree level of the superintendent, age of the superintendent, and number of professional administrative and supervisory personnel in the district central office and the scores on each item and the total score on the TMO?

Rationale

Changes in society have produced pressures both within and without the educational system. These pressures in education have generated the need for a new approach to school administration (Malone, 1973). The administrative team is a formal group comprising both central office personnel and middle management personnel with a clearly defined responsibility for and authority to enter into the school district decision-making process (McNally, 1973). As such, the team concept offers a solution to many of the current problems brought about by social change.

One problem area for administrators is the failure of traditional hierarchical organizational arrangements to prove effective in school administration. The system which has one status individual in sole authority is sadly outmoded. Such processes cause school districts to concentrate decision-making power (the power to bring about change) within one individual (Ball and Miller, 1975). If the controlling individual is effective, the organization may make some progress; however, the complexity of modern school systems and the scope of duties which must be performed preclude much chance for success.

The role of the principal in the team concept is not diminished; however, it is redefined. In many instances the principal's role may be clearly defined after years of ambiguity (McNally, 1973). In most instances, the principal becomes a vital part of the district administration.

The trust between various components of the administrative hierarchy is strengthened by the team concept. Because the scope of responsibility for each team member is clearly defined and sanctioned by board policy, suspicion of other team members' motives need not exist (Starr, 1977).

Team management should provide for collaborative efforts among central office administrators, principals, assistants, and supervisors in planning, testing new ideas, identifying areas of mutual concerns and efforts, and helping to formulate policies and recommendations for the board of education. A climate of trust, concern, openness and honesty is essential to the successful operation of the administrative team.

The team management concept has been endorsed by the major professional organizations serving school administrators. Various opinions have been voiced about the role of principals as members of the district administrative team. As the concept emerges into accepted practice, it is essential that the role of the principal be clarified.

Based upon the realization that the superintendent is the key person in the effective implementation of team management, this study was instigated. The items included on the Team Management Opinionaire were based upon the definitions and constructs appearing most frequently in the literature.

Procedures

The Team Management Opinionaire was sent to all the school superintendents in Mississippi (152). One hundred six usable returns (70%) were included in the study. Analysis of variance and multiple regression analysis were used in the statistical analyses.

The TMO is a twelve-item instrument designed by the researchers for this project. The instrument was designed to elicit the perceived degree of agreement with each statement included, ranging from "strong disagreement" at the lower end to "strong agreement" at the upper end of the scale. Scores can range from one to six. The test for internal consistency of the items on the TMO yielded an alpha coefficient of .91. (A copy of the TMO is

attached as Appendix A.)

Findings

The school superintendents in Mississippi as a group are in agreement with the role of the principal in team management as depicted by the items on the TMO. The respondents indicated moderate to strong agreement on nine of the twelve items on the instrument. On the other three items, the group manifested slight disagreement with the proposition that principals should be represented on screening teams for screening applicants for district-wide administrative positions; slight agreement was indicated for the item which stated that principals should be represented on the district-wide collective bargaining management team in districts that are involved in collective bargaining; and slight agreement was expressed for the item which stated that principals should review and provide input concerning development of the school district budget.

When the type of district in which the respondents serve was related to the scores on each item and the total score on the TMO, no significantly different mean scores were found among the four types of districts.

When the variables of district enrollment, degree level of the superintendent, age of the superintendent, and number of professional administrative and supervisory personnel in the district central office were related to each item and to the total score on the TMO, the multiple regression analysis revealed the following significant relationships: (See Appendix B)

1. Item: Principals should have direct access to the superintendent.

   A negative relationship was obtained between the number of professional personnel in the central office and the amount of agreement with this item.

2. Item: Principals should review and provide input concerning the impact of proposed board policies prior to board adoption.

   A negative relationship was obtained between the age of the superintendent and the amount of agreement with this item.

3. Item: Principals should be represented on screening teams for screening applicants for district-wide administrative positions.

   A negative relationship was obtained between the school district enrollment and the amount of agreement with this item.

   A positive relationship was found between the degree level of the superintendent and the amount of agreement with this item.

4. Item: Principals should have an active voice in developing evaluation instruments that will be used for their evaluation.

   A negative relationship was obtained between the age of the superintendent and the amount of agreement with this item.

5. Item: Principals should be encouraged to offer input into the agenda for administrative staff meetings.

   A negative relationship was obtained between the number of professional personnel in the central office and the amount of agreement with this item.

6. Item: Total Score on the TMO.

   A negative relationship was obtained between the age of the superintendent and the amount of agreement with the items as reflected by the total score on the TMO.

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Appendix A

Team Management Opinionaire

The following are statements concerning the role of the principal in team management with which some superintendents agree and others disagree. Please mark each statement in the left margin according to the amount of your agreement or disagreement by using the following scale:

1. strong disagreement
2. moderate disagreement
3. slight disagreement
4. slight agreement
5. moderate agreement
6. strong agreement

___ 1. Principals should have direct access to the superintendent.

___ 2. Principals should review and provide input concerning the impact of proposed board policies prior to board adoption.

___ 3. Principals should be represented on screening teams for screening applicants for district-wide administrative positions.

___ 4. Principals should be represented on the district-wide collective bargaining management team in districts that are involved in collective bargaining.

___ 5. Principals should have an active voice in developing evaluation instruments that will be used for their evaluation.

___ 6. Principals should have a clear understanding of the roles and responsibilities of each member of the administrative team.

___ 7. Principals should be encouraged to offer input into the agenda for administrative staff meetings.

___ 8. Principals should receive the pertinent information that is available to other administrators before it is released to outside groups.

___ 9. Principals should be directly involved in the selection and assignment of personnel to their building.

___ 10. Principals should be accepted as professional equals by other administrators.

___ 11. Principals should review and provide input concerning the development of the school district budget.

___ 12. Principals should have an opportunity to provide leadership to the team when they have the expertise needed for the particular problem at hand.

Appendix B

Summary of Results

Item	Predictor Variables: Dist. Enrol. R^2 Added	F	Deg. Level Supt. R^2 Added	F	Age of Supt. R^2 Added	F	No. Prof Pers. R^2 Added	F	Total R^2
Principals should have direct access to the superintendent.	.00	.01	.00	.04	.00	.29	.11	7.49*	.11
Principals should review and provide input concerning the impact of proposed board policies prior to board adoption.	.00	.15	.00	.43	.05	4.80*	.00	.02	.05
Principals should be represented on screening teams for screening applicants for district-wide administrative positions.	.07	8.63*	.10	8.91*	.02	2.53	.00	.14	.19
Principals should be represented on the district-wide collective bargaining management team in districts that are involved in collective bargaining.	.00	.01	.01	.75	.02	1.69	.03	1.04	.06
Principals should have an active voice in developing evaluation instruments that will be used for their evaluation.	.00	.85	.01	.36	.05	5.75*	.03	.30	.09
Principals should have a clear understanding of the roles and responsibilities of each member of the administrative team.	.00	.08	.00	.02	.02	2.20	.00	.08	.02
Principals should be encouraged to offer input into the agenda for administrative staff meetings.	.00	.16	.01	.18	.02	1.70	.05	5.66*	.08

Item	Predictor Variables								
	Dist. Enrol.		Deg. Level Supt.		Age of Supt.		No. Prof Pers.		Total
	R^2 Added	F	R^2 Added	F	R^2 Added	F	R^2 Added	F	R^2
. Principals should receive the pertinent information that is available to other administrators before it is released to outside groups.	.02	1.12	.01	1.36	.02	2.20	.00	.96	.05
. Principals should be directly involved in the selection and assignment of personnel to their building.	.01	.30	.00	.03	.01	1.19	.00	.47	.02
. Principals should be accepted as professional equals by other administrators.	.04	3.75	.00	.02	.01	1.24	.00	.82	.05
. Principals should review and provide input concerning the development of the school district budget.	.00	.23	.01	.81	.02	1.58	.00	.64	.03
. Principals should have an opportunity to provide leadership to the team when they have the expertise needed for the particular problem at hand.	.00	.00	.00	.06	.03	2.94	.01	.82	.04
TOTAL	.01	.32	.01	.36	.04	4.02*	.00	.00	.06

F _ 3.96 Significant at .05 level.